

Message Text

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44

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DODE-00 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 OC-05 CCO-00 OCL-00 EB-07 L-03

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P 071730Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6161

C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 3811

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR PFOR MO

SUBJECT: COMMERCIAL SATELLITE LEASE WASHINGTON-MOROCCO

REF: STATE 168016

1. MOROCCAN EARTH SATELLITE STATION REMAINS UNDER-UTILIZED. DURING VISIT OF US TELECOMMUNICATIONS SEMINAR IN JUNE, ASSISTANT MANAGER TOLD PARTICIPANTS THAT SLIGHTLY LESS THAN HALF OF AVAILABLE POTENTIAL OF STATION WAS THEN OPERATIONAL. OTHER HALF DEADLINED FOR LACK OF PARTS FROM US SUPPLIERS, MANY OF WHICH NO LONGER PRODUCE COMPONENTS (VIZ. AEROJET GENERAL). OF THE APPROXIMATELY HALF WHICH FUNCTIONING, SEVENTEEN CHANNELS IN REGULAR USE. OTHERS HAVE BEEN USED ON OCCASION. ACCORDING TO STATION MANAGER, USN LEASED CIRCUITS ARE KEPT OPEN AND READY 24 HOURS.

2. EMBASSY WAS REFERRED TO PTT MINISTRY FOR DETAILED INFORMATION REGARDING FINANCIAL STATUS OF GROUND SATELLITE STATION. WE RELUCTANT TO MAKE APPROACH DURING AUGUST WHEN PRINCIPAL CONTACTS ARE ON LEAVE, BUT WILL DO SO IF INSTRUCTED. IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING, HOWEVER, THAT STATION HAS NEVER MADE MONEY. LOSS SITUATION IS RELATED TO LEGAL PROBLEM INVOLVING PRE-INDEPENDENCE COMMITMENT BY GOM TO ROUTE ALL COMMUNICATIONS FOR EUROPE THROUGH PARIS. MOROCCO THUS LOCKED-IN TO SITUATION WHERE MOST OF ITS HIGH-PROFIT BUSINESS MUST GO VIA FRENCH

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CABLE INSTEAD OF US SATELLITES. UNDERSTAND AGREEMENT HAS

ANOTHER TWENTY YEARS OR SO TO RUN.

3. WITHDRAWAL OF USN LEASE WOULD IN OUR JUDGMENT DEEPEN DEFICIT. CONCESSION COULD ALSO BE VIEWED AS PRESAGING REDUCTION OR CLOSURE OF OTHER USN COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES HERE. AS FURTHER CONSIDERATION, SYLVANIA PRESENTLY WORKING WITH GOM IN HOPES PERSUADING PTT TO REPLACE OBSOLETE EQUIPMENT AND INITIATE LEGAL MOVES TO BREAK OLD FRENCH AGREEMENT. LOSS OF FOUR LEASED CHANNELS, WHILE MUCH OF REST UNDERUTILIZED, LIKELY TO UNDERCUT THIS EFFORT TO RESTORE PROFITABILITY.

4. EMBASSY INCLINED TO ADVISE CAUTION IN CONSIDERING DISCONTINUATION USN SATELLITE SERVICE LEASE AT THIS MOMENT. NEUMANN

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